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SUBJECT: EU LUKEWARM ON IDEA OF MOLDOVA CONFERENCE

REF: STATE 125824

Classified By: USEU POLOFF LEE LITZENBERGER; REASON 1.4 (B,D)

1. (C) Summary. The initial EU response to reftel demarche is lukewarm, although member states will need to be consulted for an official response. The EU will likely be most supportive of a conference whose participants include at least Russia and, ideally, Transnistria as well. The EU suggested that it would be helpful for SNEC Ambassador Mann to contact EUSR Jacobovits directly, as Jacobovits might be more hesitant about attending a conference than would member states. The EU is very concerned with Moldova's draft law on the status of Transnistria, and EU HighRep Solana may call Voronin. End summary.

EU Lukewarm to idea of Moldova Conference

2. (C) USEU poloff presented reftel demarche on U.S. support for a multilateral conference on Transnistria to Pirkka Tappiola, Council Secretariat senior advisor for Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova on July 7. Tappiola said the EU is operating on the principle that a solution of the Transnistria issue is not possible without Russia. The EU would prefer that Transnistria be invited to the conference. Alternatively, the EU would support a conference of the mediators only. If, however, Transnistria is not invited or declines to attend, the EU would then see Russian participation as essential. Tappiola asked to be informed of Moscow's reaction to the conference proposal. He said he would share the US non-paper with member states in Brussels and get back to us. He suggested that SNEC Ambassador Mann contact EUSR Jacobovits directly on this idea soon, commenting that Jacobovits might be more reluctant to attend a conference that did not include Transnistria than member states would be. He implied that, should Russia also decline to participate, EU member states would question the utility of the conference. Tappiola declined to go into further detail on the conditions that would be necessary for EU participation in the conference, but implied that member states will want assurances that a conference will complement ongoing efforts to resume negotiations, and not complicate matters further.

EU still focused on 5-sided talks

3. (C) Tappiola explained that the EU continues to work toward gaining Russian agreement to hold a "five-sided" meeting of the three mediators (OSCE, Ukraine, Russia) and the U.S. and EU. The latest EU thinking is that a direct approach to the Transnistrian leadership could facilitate Russia's acquiescence, citing recent reports from OSCE HOM Hill indicating a softening of Transnistria's position. The EU welcomed the Ukrainian plan, with all its faults, in that it signals greater engagement by Kiev. EU HighRep Solana will visit Kiev on July 19, in part to press Ukraine to take decisive steps to control its border with Transnistria.

EU Concern over Moldova's Status Law

4. (C) Tappiola said the EU was "very worried" about Moldova's draft law on the status of Transnistria, and EU High Rep may call Voronin about the issue soon. The EU, Tappiola said, would understand if Voronin had sought from Parliament a negotiating mandate for talks with Transnistria, but a detailed final status law that includes designation of who will run Transnistria amounts to an unhelpful unilateral act that Tiraspol is likely to reject. The result will be to move the whole process "ten steps backward," he said. The EU's understanding is that Voronin hopes to have the law passed by mid- to late-July. Hence the possibility of a Solana-Voronin call soon, as a damage-limitation measure.

Jacobovits visit to Washington

5. (C) Tappiola took the occasion to convey EUSR Jacobovits' desire to visit Washington the week of August 8th, if meetings could be arranged with EUR A/S Fried and other appropriate officials at State and the NSC. Alternatively, Jacobovits could travel in late August/early September if Washington interlocutors are unavailable in early August.

MCKINLEY

